



January 11, 2017

Dear Senator:

Since 1919, the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) has been the leading voice of the American people in protecting and enhancing our National Park System. On behalf of our more than one million members and supporters nationwide, we urge you to reject the nomination of Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt for Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Mr. Pruitt has a track record of undermining the stewardship of America's national parks, extraordinary places that must have the clearest air and cleanest water in the country.

The National Park Service (NPS) depends in part on the EPA to protect waterways and air in and around national parks for the millions of people that visit our parks each year. From the rivers and waterfalls of Yosemite to the skies over the Grand Canyon, protecting these natural resources and values is essential to preserve and enhance our national treasures for current and future generations.

In order to protect our nation's parks, clean air, clean water, and laws that protect them, the EPA should not be led by someone who has a history of active opposition to the mission, science, and values the agency is tasked to uphold. From air quality in parks, to waterways that flow through parks, to the most pressing challenge our parks face today, climate change, Mr. Pruitt has a long record of litigation against and opposition to strong stewardship of these resources.

When the Clean Air Act amendments were passed in 1977, Congress included a national goal of eliminating human-caused pollution that creates haze in our oldest national parks and wilderness areas, referred to as Class 1 areas. The Act mandates the restoration of natural air quality in these areas—this mandate is implemented through the Regional Haze Rule. In 2011, Mr. Pruitt suggested that the Oklahoma regional haze plan “does nothing to address air quality with respect to public health...” despite medical opinion that concluded the plan would reduce deaths and provide a cost benefit of over a million dollars annually due to reduced instances of asthma. In 2013 in the Tenth Circuit of Appeals, Mr. Pruitt argued that EPA abused the discretion that Congress afforded states to make retrofit technology determinations (*Oklahoma v. EPA* 723 F.3d 1201 (2013)), but the Court affirmed the duty of the EPA to ensure state plans comply with the Clean Air Act. And in 2016, Mr. Pruitt supported strident opposition to the EPA amendments clarifying the Regional Haze Rule—to further enhance visibility and reduce air pollution in national parks—by signing a letter that also outlined plans for a legal challenge to the revisions once final.

On clean water, Mr. Pruitt sued the EPA to overturn clean water safeguards for our nation's waters including those in and around national parks. After an incredibly lengthy and comprehensive process, the EPA published the Clean Water Rule, which protects national park waters by providing a clearer and more predictable science-based and legal framework for determining which waters are protected by the Clean Water Act (CWA). Mr. Pruitt has also joined efforts to impede limits on water pollution into the Chesapeake Bay, our nation's largest and most productive tidal estuary, with a 64,000 square mile watershed that includes almost 18 million people—two-thirds of whom get their drinking water from the watershed's rivers and streams.

In addition, Mr. Pruitt denies climate science, calling it “speculative,” a perspective that would jeopardize our nation’s most treasured places, compromising them for future generations. Our national parks are a testament to the reality of climate change. Air pollution obscures many scenic views that are the hallmark of a national park visit, and can transform outdoor recreation into a health hazard. Climate change greatly impacts wildlife habitat forcing species outside the boundaries of national parks designed to protect them. Changing ocean temperatures combined with human-caused pollution ravage coral reefs. Disappearing glaciers, shifting migration patterns for alpine birds, and coastal erosion of historic places are just some of the many effects of climate change.

Outgoing NPS Director Jon Jarvis called climate change the biggest challenge facing NPS in its second century, stating “I think the science is very clear that humans are causing the planet to warm, and that is driving climate change.” In fact, according to NPS, over the next 100 years sea level rise and storm vulnerability from climate change threatens to damage or destroy national park infrastructure and historic and cultural resources totaling more than \$40 billion. What Jarvis and the NPS Climate Change Response Program confirm is not only consensus with overwhelming scientific opinion, but the scope of the challenge we face and the importance of sound science to help parks understand, manage, and adapt to climate change.

The nomination of Mr. Pruitt comes at a critical time for addressing air and water pollution and climate change in our national parks. It is the duty of EPA to help safeguard park resources; national parks and the communities surrounding them deserve a leader of the EPA that is committed to protecting and enhancing them. NPCA is confident that Mr. Pruitt is not that nominee.

For our parks and the people they support and represent, we urge you to oppose Mr. Pruitt’s nomination. Please contact Ani Kame’enui at 202.360.6437 with questions regarding NPCA’s position.

Sincerely,



Theresa Pierno
President & CEO